

CANOEING ALONG NICARAGUA.

Adventures on Sea and Shore Among the Mosquito Indians.

By DR. J. HAMPDEN PORTER.

That spot from which we started in pursuit of the black jaguar whose chase is to be related, was a solitude so absolute that one felt as if those then occupying it were the first human beings by whom its confines had been visited.

Our party was gathered on some level ground above a first line of cliffs gradually rising far up and beyond that point at which trees ceased to grow. Here and there erythrina's scarlet flowers, or some solitary celia's golden bloom, splashed these somber woodlands with gleams of vivid color; but this available little toward relieving the scene of its stern, sad state-ness.

As we rested at our bivouac after an exhausting march, Lopez, called in his native language, He-who-sees-by-night walked out from one of the neighboring gorges, and laid a small bundle of coarse, black hairs rolled round with colic before us.

"El tigre negro," he said, and explained in terms that to reproduce would require them to be translated out of broken Spanish into English the most eccentric. It is an undertaking too formidable to be attempted; but before rendering his communications in ordinary words, the following may serve as an example of how he announced the black tiger:

"You see I go walkin' somewhere, mch- be fine sign. Well, about half a year on my hind legs to clean claws. Tiger stan' on his hind legs to clean claws. By and by—never see no scratches so high. Must be very old tiger, big as anything, an' I know 'tain't long since he been there. So I think pretty poor chance to stay when don't have no good gun, an' he can come back."

In the vernacular, Lopez found there hairs sticking to the bark, saw immense footprints, and was instantly convinced that a gigantic jaguar, also black, must be an our and out, bona fide, ramping, raging demon.

This was why he returned in such a hurry, and despite his little small kind of beast next day, we could see that long-standing superstitious fears prevailed over all recently acquired confidence in magic rules which would make a first victim dead. That night a jaguar hunted the forest below, and so far as his proceedings could be interpreted through hearing alone, he was attempting to round up deer after the royal tiger's method, which consists in driving them toward some selected place by making a circuit and roaring. If this were the case, and he succeeded, several things might happen, though it is impossible to particularize, because we know much less about jaguars than concerning their Asiatic relatives.

Admitting the design and its accomplishment, however, he would approach these frightened creatures upwind, get within springing distance, and strike some victim dead. Then the brute might either be satisfied or go on killing so long as any prey remained in reach. If content, and still supposing that subsequent acts were like those of a tiger, the slain animal would be neatly disemboweled and its viscera rolled up and laid aside. Almost invariably the haunch is devoured in a torn away in great bites, and swallowed whole.

Like all formidable cats except true panthers, jaguars are thirsty beings, so having finished that part a drink must be taken. During their gorgings most of these feline destroyers go to water more than once; but some of them, the most murderous because they need to kill often—eat little meat, living almost entirely upon warm blood.

Our self-introduced acquaintance down in the woods may have belonged to either class, yet his chances for supper appeared doubtful, for we soon heard some foxes barking.

Those small marauders follow up a prowling jaguar and often spoil his sport, just as jackals or hyenas do that of Old World beasts of prey; but there are apparently no such superstitions about them as prevail there with reference to those annoying satellites.

Any African hunter or shikari of India will swear that these creatures find cause for lions and tigers. Folk-tales concerning their employment for this purpose are endless; yet uniformly worthless, since they misrepresent the real relation which exists between those small and great meat-eaters.

The former live by their wits, do little hunting for themselves, and principally subsist upon the leavings of more capable animals. In Central and South



"HE REARED WITH TOSSED ARMS, AND SANK SHIVERING TO THE EARTH."

American foxes are the plagues of a jaguar's life. Like those we heard barking, they escort him at a safe distance, and keep up their outcries without reference to what is going on. Deer and other game fly, while all attempts to take revenge can be easily thwarted by these fleet little nuisances.

We had no need to make an early start. "He who eats us"—which is the literal meaning of this brute's name—eats us as he goes about in remote regions by day, and may be trailed at any hour. Lopez led us to the tree, and it was scored so high that we did not need a sight of those enormous tracks to know how greatly this animal must exceed the ordinary size of its kind.

Then the Indian struck out on a cold trail, and it is worth while to describe his proceedings. Most writers treat such exhibitions of skill as if there was something mysterious about them; they tacitly assume that the senses of savages are more developed and have a wider range than those belonging to civilized men. Not at all; the whole secret lies in their concentration, generation after generation, upon a few objects, until inherited aptness has been added to what one individual under those circumstances attains. Savages must needs acquire for himself in order to live.

Thus we, to whom many things noticed by these natives passed rapidly and unheeded, were in reality able to see and hear more than they; since to them most of nature's pages remained blank, and a perpendicular, and there the trail vanished, leaving, to all appearance, stranded in a labyrinth of tortuous, sheer-walled gorges.

Lopez & Co. appreciated the situation instantly, and this is how they must have reasoned:

"Figers stay where venison, pork, monkeys, and fish can be got without much trouble. They are lazy, love water, seek shade. The big black devil we follow probably came up here to communicate with some infernal being who lives on one of these peaks. His tracks can't be traced over such a break-neck route, but he will go down again, and we can find the place where this demoniac went out."

Thereupon our guide led us through successive mazes with much the same readiness that a bird might have found over them, and regaining the forest skirted those abutments rising abruptly from its verge.

These hawk-eyed Indians did not seek in vain very long, yet that brute had blinded its trail with great skill. No more was done than to follow the tracks of the plants downward, are accustomed to do when opportunity serves; still, the trick looked surprising, and none but experts could have detected it. Our quarry had jumped from rock to rock, always choosing bare ones, which would hold no imprints, until the earth, with only a single stone to step on, intervened between one last safe foothold and the nearest tree. This, however, held a patch of moss, and either overbalanced with his leap or

infinitesimal things altogether meaningless. At first the trail led us over very rough country, winding among crags, skirting precipices, and threading many a "dark and narrow glen." Pursuing this devious path on which the traces were often so faint that none but specially trained men could have recognized them, we came upon what was left of a wares, or wild pig. He had no business up there, and still less to wander off from his companions; but animals are not animated machines, facts contradict the doctrine of an implanted instinct at every turn, and wild beasts display all kinds of inconsistencies.

This one had behaved in the most rash and irregular manner, thereby losing its life; for a jaguar will no more pit himself against these wares when together, than he will engage a herd of peccaries.

The ground showed that his feast had been interrupted by this defiant peccary's friends; we also saw how long bounds carried him to an escarpment of rock almost

through inadvertence, the jaguar put one paw on it, that we were tracking that sign immediately, except an infallible glance aloft, and understood everything. He saw the direction indicated, viewed a claw-scarred bough, and deploying his followers into open order, swung round to find where this creature landed after taking an arboreal tour.

When found, the trail for a long distance was so direct as to make it certain that some particular destination lay at its end. Once more, however, our game took to free-traveling. The jaguar happened upon another set of footprints emerging from an entangled cactus and thornbush brake, and he instantly took advantage of this opportunity to send any pursuers afoot.

This cunning creature leaped straight up where his own and the other's tracks joined, repeating its former excursion on high and getting found out as before.

By now, also, both of us knew some-thing which our native attendants did not know; namely, that we were tracking a man-eater. After the animal had been shot such an opinion was fully substantiated, but it needed no corroborative testimony. This long journey of his, the foresight and precaution when pursued could not have been more than a mere possibility, that wariness which never lags, and which compels a hunter to tell a plain story to anyone familiar with these scourges. Full as he is of tricks and devices, ordinary beasts do not act like this one; that sort of behavior is confined to valuable, or more especially dangerous, brutes, whom man's enterprise have often compelled to match their wits against human sagacity.

Those reasonings which took him into a tree when another jaguar's trail might have been followed, and which were not far enough.

The lower mind is frequently acute without being comprehensive, and never rises to any process of abstract thought. We recovered our lost traces in due course, and this time they led directly into a valley nearly without trees, where the animal had entered its lair under some overhanging rocks. They formed an entrance or porch to a cavern which might be quite large, besides having more than one opening; so the first step under such circumstances was directed toward blocking any avenues permitting exit. An aperture leading out behind had stones, spiny nopal, and thorn bushes piled into it, after which all assembled in front and formally besieged the jaguar.

Of course, it goes without saying that only heroes of romance seek such an animal as this in a cave. It must be made to come out and fight, but since starving any of the large cats is time thrown away, none was to be let loose under such circumstances. This beast got into a rage, and made an onslaught of its own accord.

That is not unusual, however, where-for making long before the onset of tigers or their kin becomes far more exciting than safe. Feline beasts are in carnations of sudden death, and no man can go up to a place like this without the risk of instant destruction.

Our Indians fully appreciated their danger; they knew that rifles at either side of the entrance would most probably not prevent someone from being killed in case of a rush; yet all worked as coolly as if nothing threatened. First dry grass and leaves, next light wood, then green logs with noxious weeds and vile-smelling creepers intermixed, were carefully laid down, after which everybody fell back some little distance while Lopez set fire to the pile.

There was a strong draught through crevices, the fire constantly fed, burned for some time, and a volume of stifling smoke rolled inward; that one scarcely comprehended how any air-breathing creature could live there.

We heard a hoarse, half-strangled roar, we saw the wild, dark form surrounded by flames. With one dull, sickening crash the animal fell as if stricken by a thunderbolt, and then this infuriated brute was raging among scattered, flying figures. Fortunately it had become partially blind on its last march, or what this what happened would have ensued. In such cases a man must shoot quickly, but above all else keep cool.

Both fired, an awful splash tried to spring upon us, fell short, and crunched with jaws dripping frothy blood. In the past of the animal's disorderly march, we were reared with tossing arms, and sank shivering to the earth.

(To be continued.)

By a SENATOR on board of the Vandalia. At—"Whack, Row de Dow!" Behold, our glorious banner floats in the air; But four hours since, base traitors swore we could not plant it there; But brave Dupont he led us on, to fight the vanishing foe. And soon the rebel standard was in the dust laid low.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, Whack Row de Dow, How do you do Seesh?

When we were seen advancing, they laughed with foolish pride, And said that soon Northern feet they'd sink beneath the tide And with their guns trained carefully, they And the gallant Vandalia struck up the music for the dance.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. The Susquehanna next in line delivered her broadside. With deadly aim each shot was sent, and each shot was piled And still our gallant ships advanced, and each shot was piled. Poured in her deadly merrymen, and the foe fell thick and fast.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. Each ship advanced in order, each commander wore a smile. Until the famed Vandalia brought up the rear, and as our guns were shortest, we balanced to the right, Which brought us to the enemy, the closest in the fight.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. Then "round the room (Port Royal Bay) we took a Highland fling. And showed them in Fort Walker what loud music we could sing. And thus we poured in our broadsides, which brought their courage low. And o'er the rebel batteries soon our Union flag did flow.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. Three cheers for gallant Haggerty—he led us And three four our loved Whiting—he led us The real blue: Success to every officer who fought with us that day. Together may we pass unscathed through Vandalia's gallant fray.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. A health to every gallant tar who did his duty well: Peace to the ashes of the dead, who nobly fought and fell. 'Twas in a glorious cause they died, the Union to maintain—We who are left, when called upon, will try to do our part.

CHORUS—Whack Row de Dow, etc. For Senior Commander-in-Chief. From the Providence, R. I., Journal.

The Department of the Potomac has unanimously endorsed Commodore John M. Elroy, of Washington, D. C., for election as Senior Vice-Commander-in-Chief at the 35th National Encampment, to be held at Cleveland the first week in September. He is editor of The National Tribune, established 1877, and published at Washington. He is an able man, loyal veteran and faithful comrade, eminently qualified for the position.

An Open Letter from Rev. F. A. Harrison, Rapid, N. Y., July 17, 1900. "Dr. Peter Fahnestock, Chicago, Ill. Dear Sir and Brother: I have been greatly benefited by the use of your Blood Vitalizer. I was taken sick last February and was confined to the house for seven weeks. I consulted a physician, and he told me I had asthma. He gave me some medicine which, while it gave me some relief, did not remove the seat of the disease. I coughed both day and night, and had severe pains in the lower part of my stomach and sides. The doctor also a swelling on my side, larger than my hand. Furthermore, I was so weak I could hardly stand on my feet. About that time I read of your Blood Vitalizer and sent for some, with I commenced to use it.

"I am now able to attend to my work on my circuit. I preach twice each Sunday in parties of four churches. I feel well, and except when I take cold, I have no cough. The pain in my stomach and sides has disappeared. I think, through God's blessing, your Blood Vitalizer has saved my life. Your brother in Christ, "F. A. HARRISON."

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THE PORT ROYAL DANCE.

By a SENATOR on board of the Vandalia.

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TRUE SON OF THE UNION.

One of Gen. Shanks's Old Troopers Tells of His Colonel.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I desire to say a few things through your paper on the life and death of Gen. J. P. C. Shanks. Gen. Shanks was born in Martinsburg, Va., in 1826. He moved with his parents to Jay County, Ind., in 1840. He died at his residence in Portland, Ind., Jan. 23, 1901.

Gen. Shanks served in the Legislature of Indiana, several terms in Congress, on Gen. Fremont's staff during the civil war, and had an appointment as Indian Agent. The first time I remember of meeting J. P. C. Shanks was during the Fremont campaign, when I was a boy. The neighbors had built a log school-house, with mud-and-stick chimney, and fireplace. The hearth had sunk two or three inches below the floor. The house was called with rough lumber, and was so low that an unusually tall man could not stand straight under the ceiling. In 1856 Shanks came to make a speech in our school-house described above. When he arose to speak he could not stand straight under the ceiling, so had to stand down in the hearth.

From that time on I knew J. P. C. Shanks. When he organized the 7th Ind. Cav. I joined the regiment. Shanks became the Colonel, and Thomas M. Brown, of Winchester, Lieutenant Colonel. There is no place in the world like the army to develop manhood and character. I was with Col. Shanks in camp, on the march, and in battle. I was with him in that noted battle charge at Oklawaha, Fla. (known in history as Ivy Farm). Amid all trying ordeals he manifested a true soldierly spirit and courage. A braver

man and kinder officer to those under him never drew a sabre than Gen. Shanks. The worth of that man was never appreciated. He met many reverses, yet he met them all with true courage. He was an honest man, true to his convictions, and nothing could swerve him from what he thought to be right. He had his best moments, and made his mistakes, and no one knew it better than he.

If Gen. Shanks ever had an enemy in the rank and file of his regiment I never knew it. The last speech I ever heard him make was at our last regimental Reunion at Indianapolis, in September, 1900. As his towering form stood before us that morning, and he poured forth his eloquence, every brave heart present was touched, and eyes were suffused with tears. One of the impressive scenes at the funeral was a white horse led behind the hearse with Gen. Shanks's old army saddle, with his army equipments and boots and spurs on the horse.

Comrades of the 7th Ind. Cav. present at the funeral, Jan. 23, were: Alexander Miller, Fairmount; Eli Frasher, Portland; H. C. Gullett, Ridgeville; W. C. Kittermiller, Duakirk; Rev. A. S. Whetzel, Duakirk, Ind.; and Adam Neeson, Fort Recovery, Ohio.—A. S. WHITSELL, Duakirk, Ind.

Hon. W. L. Jones, of Washington. EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I wish you would mention in your paper the many kind acts of our present Representative, Hon. W. L. Jones, is doing for our soldiers, and which deserve the praise of every veteran. He has shown himself a man of a lower of justice to whom justice is due.—MARTIN O. HOLSTON, Co. C, 16th Ill. Cav., Spokane, Wash.

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BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

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AND THE FIGHT AT EL CANEY.

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